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AUTHOR Neussling, Vonne
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ABSTRACT

Recent advertising research has suggested that to gain initial entry into and retain continual success with a targeted audience of consumers, it is wise to mirror the attitudes and desires of those consumers. This has proven effective in the United States, where companies such as Chevrolet, Levi Strauss, and Coca-Cola have successfully catered to Americans' desire for life-enhancing, exciting products. The same principle is being undertaken with sales to foreign countries as well, as advertisers try to anticipate what will make a product or service attractive given the culture's values. Advertisers have discovered that many products have global appeal for similar reasons, but that forcing an American attitude on a European or oriental subsidiary without first understanding where the product fits into the physiological, psychological, and emotional lifestyle of the target culture can damage sales. Arab culture was accommodated, for instance, when Polaroid photography was introduced, allowing men to photograph their wives and daughters without the intervention of a stranger in the processing lab. Additionally, the development of a close-working partnership between the company and the prospective consumer increases the likelihood that the audience will accept the product. While more research is needed in the area of attitude and subsequent purchasing behavior, successful marketing of a product depends largely upon a company's understanding of their audience's cultural values and quality of life expectations. (Four pages of references are included.) (JC)

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MIRROR YOUR AUDIENCES'S ATTITUDE: A GLOBAL PROFILE

Vonne Neussling
Department of Communication
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, Indiana 47809

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ABSTRACT

Mirror Your Audiences Attitude: A Global Profile

International communications are now fostered with audiences in a world market where borders have less and less meaning. This paper focuses on the global audience and the reasons why offering a certain product or service that is attractive in the United States may not appeal to global neighbors. Forcing an American attitude on a European or oriental subsidiary without first understanding where the product fits into the physiological, psychological and emotional lifestyle of the target culture can be a bottom-line issue. In addition, information will be presented concerning the wide range of special audiences and the increasing need for an organization to consider original commitment to the country and to the customer that they are cultivating. The paper concludes that attitudes are specific and situational, and may not always be connected; e.g., a consumer may like a product as well as dislike it. Furthermore, implications for the future suggest that the key to a continuing relationship may be to mirror the consumer's attitude and to understand the quality of life expectation in each audience culture.

MIRROR YOUR AUDIENCE'S ATTITUDE: A GLOBAL PROFILE

Walt Whitman said, "To have great poets, there must be great audiences, too." (Bartlett, 1980, p. 577). In order to have a great poem, a great song or a great product, it would seem necessary to cultivate the positive attitude and sentiment of a great audience. Without an audience, we have no business. But then, we can only be a good audience if something is important to us. "More than anything else, we are what we believe, what we dream, what we value," contends Arnold Mitchell, author of The Nine American Lifestyles. (p. 3). Thus, the first implications for continued success in either the domestic or international market depends on individual auditors who have positive feelings and desires for available products. In short, the point is evident that like beauty, any product is in the eye of the beholder.

Harold Lasswell's 1940 five-question communication model--WHO, SAYS WHAT, IN WHICH CHANNEL, TO WHOM, WITH WHAT EFFECT--is still a timely audience analysis tool. Purchasing patterns of audiences have become more sophisticated and demanding as we approach the 1990 decade. As these patterns continue to change, the message from the source to the receiver is crucial. We may present the same sales message to an audience, but the individualism of each person may make persuasion by the same stimulus or generation of the same response, uncertain.

Instant demographics are available to give a clear picture on the income, career, age, marital status, sex and social background of a

potential target audience. In addition, for more than a decade, marketers have been going a step further with the use of psychographics, i.e., the probing of how individuals think and feel, their life patterns, work habits, avocations, personal aspirations, insecurities, beliefs, opinions, values and life styles (Lazer, 1963; Pearson, 1985). Psychographics is especially beneficial in segmenting differences in audiences from various cultural groups.

In the last twenty years there has been a dramatic change in the attitudes, values and life styles of various age groups (Drucker, 1985, Mitchell). And in a certain sense, Plato's philosophy that, "the true creator is necessity who is the mother of our invention," (Plato, 427-347 B.C.) would be more applicably changed to desire is the mother of invention. The pendulum swings back to the Latin poet who called the human being, "rerum novarum cupidus" (greedy for new things) (Drucker, 1985, p. 151).

This paper focuses on the image of the marketing audience. It suggests that both the domestic and international audiences have changed in attitudes, values, and life styles. It addresses the concept that in order to attain initial entry and retain continual success with any marketing audience, it is feasible to mirror the attitudes and desires of the consumer. Thus, this mirrored reflection will give a clearer representation of the quality of life that can be expected in each market subculture. In addition, the paper purports that formulation of a close-working partnership will increase the likelihood that the audience will accept the product.

Review of the Literature

There are innumerable reasons why companies in recent years are listening to their immediate audiences. It is not just that they have learned that cavalier attitudes are no longer in vogue, but also that listening is the trend of the times. Companies have learned that there can only be "productivity through people" [audiences] by listening to the wants/desires of consumers (Dunn, Norburn & Birley, 1985). Peters and Waterman in their "search" learned that excellent companies not only innovate continuously, but one of their strongest attributes is their "closeness to the customer."

Frequent references in the literature stress audience satisfaction. As an example, when William Procter and James Gamble formed a partnership in 1837, Gamble said: "If you cannot make pure goods and full weight, go to something else that is honest . . ." (Smale, 1985). Procter and Gamble is still following what the founders would have "judged to be the right thing" for their audiences (Smale, 1985). In another example, IBM's philosophy is that customer response and attitude must permeate the company. Its foremost objective is the attitude that keeps everyone, "from the chairman of the board to the parking-lot attendant" pulling in the same direction for IBM's audience (Uttal, 66).

Not only is audience satisfaction and quality merchandise a necessity for success in these modern times, but it is a prerequisite for the prevention of litigation (Department of Trade and Industry, 1982). Satisfied audiences are an organization's best word-of-mouth advertising, while dissatisfied audiences ventilate and spread their

bad experiences with a product, (Technical Assistance Research, 1981). There is no longer much of a future for a company that is friendly at purchase time and hostile in a complaint situation, because without a customer, there is no need for the product.

Changing Climate

"The purpose of business is to get and keep a customer," (Levitt, 1983, p. 48). For some audiences, there is a growing desire demand, rather than a need demand, that causes the consumer to search for a more satisfying and fulfilling life experience (Campbell, p. 27). Beyond the traditional reflection of motivation for safety, food and shelter, there is a never-changing desire to satisfy, or enhance personal interests for a change in life style. This desire for a better life continues to be generated by cultural and social pressures and, not surprisingly, begins to affect values, attitudes and behavior (Wilson, 1984; Sloane, 1986). Carl S. Sloane, president and C.E.O. of Temple, Barker & Sloane, Inc. contends that this changing climate is observable both domestically and internationally:

Unrest in the Middle East; strife in South Africa; export drives in Brazil and elsewhere; the new capitalism of China; stresses within Russian society; urban violence in America; the women's liberation; and yes, even the emergence of Yuppies all bear witness to the universal drive for a better life. . . (p. 8)

Looking back merely one hundred years ago, we can observe that our ancestors were born, lived, married and died within an area of fifty miles or less. Their only opportunity to be exposed to international life was to read about it since most communication was limited to face-to-face interaction (Mitchell, 1983, p. 199). Needless to say,

in those early times, one did not speculate on a changing life style or question the norms of the culture (Mitchell, 1983). The phenomenon of change is so insidiously slow that one is rarely cognizant of the process; we almost need to take a second look to realize that a transformation has occurred. Indeed, William Bridges in his book Transitions describes this illusive occurrence:

Things go slowly for a time and nothing seems to change--until suddenly the eggshell cracks, the branch blossoms, the tadpole's tail shrinks away, the leaf falls, the bird molts, the hibernation begins. . . (p. 5)

Bridges surmises that both joyous and sad stages in our lives--love, marriage, divorce, death, illness, and work or integration of another cultural style--bring about change. Conversely, Levinson contends that it is not necessarily the stages, but the adjusting and coping with the life stages that are the dominant factors that induce the change process (Mitchell, 1983). Briefly looking back at the period since World War II, we are impressed with the impact of the following cultural developments: the baby boom, the "me" generation with its escalated divorce rate and increase in single-parent homes, the baby bust that followed, and finally women's career orientation ethic and postponed marriages (Drucker, 1985). Without question, these realities have left an indelible mark on individual attitudes, expectations, desires and life styles.

Often coming from single parent homes, the young urban professionals (Yuppies) have disciplined themselves to work long hours in order to fulfill their vision of money and success (Drucker, 1985, 13-14). Teenagers today also differ from those in other decades; they

feel that they have already been exposed to the future. Research suggests that they are mirroring the values of their grandparents rather than those of their parents (Trachtenberg, 1986).

As more women enter the job market, teenagers are influential in family purchasing. Typically, teenagers respond to a product as an extension of their self-concept. On the practical level, Levi Strauss, McDonald's and Coca-Cola are learning that thirteen-to-nineteen year-olds do not respond to verbal commercials, but are quickly alerted to fast-paced music (Trachtenberg, 1986). One reason is that music helps them to identify with the brand and to persuade them to think, "This is who I am." Nowhere is this music power more noticeable than in Chevrolet's 'Heartbeat' theme. As Chevrolet mirrored the desire of this youthful audience, the 'Heartbeat' theme became so successful that the company dropped the slogan for its trucks and included it in 'Heartbeat' (Serafin, 1986, p. 2, 34).

Focus on Similarities

More than ever, sales plans seem out of date in modern times because you can never be sure where your audience may be. Domestic territoriality has become global; technology has brought the life styles of others into our living room. The governing theory is that we will like what we see if it is modern and innovative. We may not need the product, but we have a desire for anything modern to make our life more meaningful. Daniel J. Boorstin, historian and author of The Americans: The Democratic Experience has characterized our age as "the republic of technology," whose "supreme law. . .is convergence,

the tendency for everything to become more like everything else." He contends that Americans are "affiliated less by what they believe than by what they consume." Increasingly, wherever you travel--Madrid, Puerto Rico, Portugal or Heidelberg, students are wearing Levi jeans, listening to transistor radios and drinking Coca-Cola. Clearly, more and more the world is developing the same taste as the various countries dubb our movies and television programs in their language (Diaz, 15).

Researchers note that we are dealing with social psychology in brand purchasing. For instance, there is a sentimental, emotional relationship between a person and his or her car (Will, 1985). Overall, says the world sales director for BMW automobiles, "we are not selling transport equipment; we are selling cars as a life style concept" (Will, 1985, p. 96). The driver of a Porche likes to think the automobile says nonverbally how he/she feels. The Porche is indeed an expression of its owner like "a piece of clothing. . . something that the owner wears and is seen in." (Schutz, 1986, p. 98). Seeing themselves as entrepreneurs, this audience segment places a "high expectation on themselves. . .their hobbies. . .the clothes they wear, and on the restaurants they go to. . .(Schutz, 1986, p. 98)" and the performance of their cars. The charismatic Saab 900 purports to be an extension of one's personality as it "transforms you into anybody that you wish to be," (Bedard, 1987, p. 69). Obviously for Americans and Mexicans, a car that gives you status and attention is very desirable. However, people purchase a specific car for many reasons, and this individualism

differs in the person and in the country. According to an Advertising Age survey, a car is looked upon more as an object to possess in the international markets (Snyder and Parry, 1986; Italian men, from the time they are children, develop a chauvinistic attitude toward possessing their own Fiat, Alfa Romeo or Ferrari. Germans prefer to trust their own domestic cars on the no-speed limit "Autobahn." The United Kingdom prefers Japanese cars because they include factory extras; the frugal Swiss do not want extras; thus they refuse the Japanese cars, while the Japanese trust only cars that a person with status endorses. Over the past seven years Foote, Cone & Belding has used a consumer "thinking and feeling" planning grid to determine the various degrees of involvement people have with different products. After interviewing over 20,000 people in twenty-three countries the company concludes that a given product seems to have the same degree of relationship involvement from country to country, but for different reasons (Berger, 1986). Erbring and Young (1980) report that people are most likely to hold the same individual perceptions as those of their friends, families and significant others.

Individual Perceptions

"The problem with human being . . . is they are all too busy defending their individual perceptions," notes Edward De Bono, former Harvard professor, (Piper, 1986). As previously mentioned, people respond to a product the way they see it. The challenge of individual perceptions has always been a challenge domestically because of the multiple culture in any country. For instance, in our country,

Bostonians prefer brown eggs while Midwesterners prefer white; Southerners prefer grits while Northerners prefer hash browns; and New Yorkers prefer Scotch while Wisconsinites prefer brandy. And so it goes, as long as people defend their own identity, there will be exceptional overlaps and subsegments within major markets. Here too, individuals are slow to forsake their personal life style identity.

First of all, remembering that "markets are as varied as the combinations of culture, politics, and resources that create them (Schanck, 1986, p. 41), we must sensitize ourselves to form an adaptive partnership with the country and audience that we are striving to cultivate (Schanck, p. 41). In one case, consider the life style of the people living in the U.S.S.R.--a life style that is foreign to us. However, the Soviet audience has the same attitudes and desires for security and high-tech material comforts as we do. They, too, want to enhance the well-being of their daily lives. Even so, the literature suggests that limited quantities of merchandise are imported for the consumer (Tinsley, 1986). In addition, American advertising is not allowed in Russian newspapers (Parry, 1986). Soviets still depend on the more dependable word-of-mouth advertising (Parry, 1986). However, even though reaching the Soviet audience is tedious and time-consuming, once the products are approved, typically, the people excel as a consumer audience (Parry, 1986).

Secondly, before entering an international market, one needs reliable information concerning the audience's attitude/perception of America. Ideally, we like to think that other countries have respect and admiration for the United States. A paradoxical example concerns

five Latin American countries. As we've seen, on the one hand, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Honduras and the Caribbean countries of Puerto Rico admire the United States and value its products (Rossman, 1985). On the other hand, Mexico and Argentina view the United States, and consequently its products, negatively (Rossman, 1985).

Thirdly, in many cases, marketers divide international audiences into the sophisticated and unsophisticated consumers (Diaz, pp. 12-20). Turnbull & Asser's, one of the most fashionable shops in London, caters to the royal family and also to wealthy Americans. This company, which has traditionally served the affluent, relies on word-of-mouth advertising and maintains business through personal recommendations (Oliver, 1985, p. 36-37).

Likewise, L'Air Dor, a company in Toronto confirms that understanding the life style of its audience may be the key. L'Air Dor has mirrored the desires of its limited audience in the United States, the Mideast and the United Kingdom. One of its products is a perfume that contains flakes of 23-karat gold in each bottle; each 32-oz flask costs \$10,600 (Remington, 1986, pp. 22-23). Notwithstanding, as is often the case, it is not always a simple matter to pinpoint the sophisticated and the affluent. Alfred Sung, a leading international designer, finds it difficult to identify the affluent. His research reveals that his most reliable audience is made up of people who are not affluent but who want to appear affluent (Remington, 1986).

Audience Attitude

Since ancient times, man has tried to find simple explanations of what motivates people to do what they do. After years of research, Ajzen & Fishbein (1969, 1970, 1972, 1977) conclude that "a person's attitude has a consistently strong relation to his or her behavior when it is directed at the same target and when it involves the same action." In general, a person can be motivated when attitude is directed at a single target, need or desire.

Drucker (1985, p. 190) speaks of a German chemist who refused to mirror and market his target audience:

A German chemist developed Novocain as the first local anesthetic in 1905. But he could not get the doctors to use it; they preferred total anesthesia (they only accepted Novocain during World War I). But totally unexpectedly, dentists began to use the stuff. Whereupon--so the story goes--the chemist began to travel up and down Germany making speeches against Novocain's use in dentistry. He had not designed it for that purpose!

Similarly, DDT was first developed for a specific audience--the American soldiers of World War II; it was designed to help protect soldiers from dreaded tropical insects. However, the greatest market for DDT proved to be the farmers who learned that the spray would protect their crops and livestock from insects (Drucker, p. 190). Along the same line, C.E. Wollman started Delta Airlines as a crop-dusting service in the 1920s, not imagining that his airline would soon be flying people to seventy-five cities (Levering, 1984, pp. 74-76).

In another situation, Freshtaste, a U.S. manufacturer of milk-sterilizing equipment realized an opportunity to develop an audience

in Japan. With Japan's large demanding population and limited supply of fresh milk, Freshtaste proposed to develop a sterilized product that could be stored for three months (Kotler, p. 119).

One other aspect of motivating people is a special strategy that is being used increasingly and that is setting the purchasing stage. Yes, stores are becoming more aware and sensitive to the impact of surroundings on the success of sales. Since decor may intensify the emotional atmosphere and lend an added persuasive charge, more and more marketers are setting the stage to entice their audience. Retailers have learned that by designing an esthetic boutique atmosphere and by highlighting merchandise with light and warm colors, their customers are more prone to show interest in the merchandise and be tempted to buy (A New Generation of Discount).

Excitement and Well-Being

The revolutionary concern for individualism is becoming more evident with each passing year (Graphic, 1985-1986). Oliver Wendell Holmes quoted John Lothrop Motley's witty words, "Give us the luxuries of life, and we will dispense with its necessities," (Stevens, 1948). This philosophical thinking is reflected in the life style of the fashionable.

Fabian Linden, executive director of the Conference Board's Consumer Research Center maintains:

Across the board, the average American family is increasingly able not only to buy more high quality necessities, but also to have money left over to purchase an abundance of convenience and luxuries. . . (Standards of living rate, 1987, p. 3)

In Campbell's book, The Sense of Well-Being in America, he points out that the need for well-being not only depends upon the gratification of material needs, relationships, and satisfaction with oneself, but also the dominant value of luxuries. One most ambitious company, Antonovich Furs in New York, stresses the realization of this desire by keeping a finger on the life style and pulse of its auditors. The company's approach suggests that "all of life's big moments" should be celebrated. One of its ads in the New York Times highlights a "a divorce-is-final fox coat," with the advice to, "shed the tears and slip into a fur" (Business Reports, 1987, p. 24). In looking for the audience to endorse its newly found wisdom, Antonovich also offers, "the thirtieth-birthday coat," the "I-just-threw-the-bum-out-coat," the "raise or big-promotion coat," "the second-marriage coat," and "the new-grandmother coat" (Business Reports, March, 1987, p. 24).

Since values and beliefs that people temporarily hold tend to be elusive, Drucker (1985), warns that every single product is on trial for its life and that its life span is as short as the attention span of the audience. Heineken found that it must continually move its target to keep the youth market since young people grow older and teens come of age (Bowen, 1986). One approach to tapping how the audience feels about a product is to envision how the product will make the auditor's life more varied, more content, or a bit happier.

Historically, Saudi Arabia had no need for photography because its religion requires that the women be veiled. However, Polaroid instant photography gave the Arab men the pleasure of photographing

their wives and daughters without the intervention of a stranger in a processing lab. This magical product helped the Arabs to have a more contented life style.

The idea of excitement and well-being has produced winning results with our neighbor, Egypt, as it awaits the modern technology in television, home videos, and computers (Hassan, 1986). Reflecting and mirroring the specific desires of our audience help us to form a relationship with the audience.

Relationship Marketing

Franklin D. Roosevelt is remembered for his expertise in relationship marketing; he had the ability to personalize what he said, and to give millions of radio listeners the warm feeling that he was talking directly to them. The heart of any relationship is in the warmth that the speaker builds with the audience. In fact, the quality of the personal contact with the customer may be juxtaposed with some of the features of the product (Band, 1986). As we reach the end of the 1980s, new approaches are needed to maintain a relationship with the consumer audience: they are asking for more than a desire and need of a product. For the first time, consumers are asking for humanity to accompany the product.

A wonderful example of relationship marketing is Hewlett-Packard's desire to help its customer envision its commitment to continual service. Just to be clear, the company changed its slogan to "when a supplier becomes a partner" (Band, 1986, p. 3). Recently, West Germany has initiated close interpersonal contact with its world

customers in order to serve their individual needs in machine tools. This close partner interaction is wooing the market away from Britain who has been more aloof and indirect (Wilson, 1984).

China's National Light Industrial Products Import and Export Corporation is laying the groundwork for relationship marketing. The point is evident that with innumerable agents in Hong Kong and Macan and forty-nine offices in China designed for the specific purpose of meeting the expectations of overseas audiences, the corporation is thinking of its responsibility to its customer (Kenny, 1986).

Apparently, Canada's largest hotel, The Four Seasons, has attributed its growth from a single hotel to an entire chain by remembering to give individual attention to the needs of business executives. The policy was to build a relationship with its guests that would make their life and travel easier (Band, October, 1986, p. 31). Professor Leonard L. Berry calls this customer-getting appeal, "managing the evidence," (Berry, 1980, pp. 24-29). This nonverbal evidence is reflected in fresh towels and sheets, covered drinking glasses, a sanitized paper band on the toilet, and an end piece of toilet tissue designed in a neat arrow (Berry, 1980).

Audiences throughout the world have one major thing in common--a desire for personal concern in their relationships (Kenny, 1986). Joyce Hall, founder of Hallmark cards, started his small business of personal concern in a room in the YMCA. During his lifetime, he learned that people were willing to spend three billion dollars a year on personal sentiment (McGough, 1986). Even sentimental verse changes with attitudes and life styles, but Hallmark has always maintained a

policy of discretion, in its attempt to mirror the desires of its audience. While maintaining its traditional policy of discretion and also mirroring the desires of its audience, the company must run the gamut of sentiment, e.g., "I'd like to tell you just how much I love you. Have you got all night?" (McGough, 1986, p. 92).

Conclusion

Each marketing audience changes its values, attitudes and life styles over a period of time. This paper focused on the concept that mirroring the desires and needs of a specific consumer audience produces a reasonable perspective and a clearer representation of the quality of life expected. The intent of the paper was to emphasize the change from the traditional demand for necessities to the desire for modern technology and a better life. Secondly, the paper purported to show that inquiries into the dynamics of global life styles may uncover important insights for research in each audience segment which would increase the probability of successful marketing.

Much more research will be required to substantiate the cause-and-effect relationship between attitude, desire and purchasing behavior. Continual research will be needed to discover the potential of mirroring the ever-changing attitude of a target audience.

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